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ABSTRACT

This study examined the responses children made on a photo sorting task when given a choice between race and sex as a basis for pairing photographs of Black and White children their own ages. It was hypothesized that children in racially integrated schools would make relatively fewer sortings based on race than their counterparts in racially homogeneous schools. Of additional interest was whether sorting patterns by sex, across racial lines, varied if the subject himself was included in the pairings, as distinguished from his pairing of others across racial lines. Results showed that white children, whether they attended racially integrated schools or all-white schools, had similar sorting patterns. Race and sex membership of students generally, had no significant effects on their sorting patterns. (Author/PC)

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Session E-13

Social Schemata of Young Children Attending Schools Varying in Racial Composition: Race Versus Sex in a Binary-Choice Photo Sorting Task

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Studies by Kuethe and his associates (Kuethe, 1962a, 1962b, 1964; Kuethe & Stricker, 1963; Kuethe & Weingartner, 1964) have shown that when subjects place felt figures of adults and children of both sexes on a field, the figures are placed in spatial arrangement with one another according to certain patterns. For example, figures of a man and a woman are usually placed near each other, with same-sex pairings rarely occurring; a figure of a child is placed closer to the figure of an adult female than to the figure of an adult male. The associations that individuals make on these tasks are presumed to correspond to the way they perceive people in life as "belonging together". Kuethe (1964) defines these mental associations of people by an individual as "social schemata". This study was concerned with the associative strength of race and sex in the social schemata of young children, some of whom attended racially integrated schools and some of whom attended schools having racially homogeneous student populations. Specifically, the study examined the responses children made on a photo sorting task when given a choice between race and sex as a basis for pairing photographs of Black and White children their own ages. It was hypothesized that children in racially integrated schools would make relatively fewer sortings based on race than their counterparts in racially homogeneous schools. Associations among individuals by sex membership, with race notwithstanding, would seem to be more common to their experiences and observations. Given only the two criteria, the latter group would seem more likely to regard people as belonging together because they are members of the same race, since associations by sex across racial lines would be a more rare occurrence in their experiences. Although no predictions were made in advance, subjects were also compared by race and sex membership on the associations they made using the two criteria.

The experimental task used in the study involved sorting two-inch, black & white photographs of children according to race or sex in a series of forced-choice situations. Four different photographs, consisting of faces only, of a White boy (WB), White girl (WG), Black boy (BB), and Black girl (BG) were used in the study. The subjects in the photographs were eight-year old children. These materials were prepared especially for the study. The sorting tasks were performed with combinations of three photographs at a time, with the following combinations being used: WG, BG, BB; WB, BG, BB; WB, BB, WG; and WB, WG, BG. The sorting tasks were prepared in a booklet which was presented to each subject at the time of performance. The booklet consisted of $8\frac{1}{2}$" X 14" sized pages. Three circles, which were the same size as the photographs, were drawn in outline on the front side of each page. Two of the circles were placed next to each other on one edge of the page and the third circle was isolated from them, located horizontally at the opposite edge. Envelopes containing three photographs were attached to the back side of each page. When the booklet was open to any page, the sorting task to be performed appeared at the subject's right side and the materials to be used on that page were contained in the envelope to his immediate left. Short pieces of adhesive tape,

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which could be exposed for adhesion on both sides by stripping, were attached to the back of each photograph. These were used by the subject to hold the photographs in place once sortings were made. The general instructions to all subjects were as follows: "Look at the three pictures in the envelope and then look at the three circles on the page. You will see that two of the circles are together and the other circle is separated from them. Take the two pictures you think should go together and put them in the two circles that are close to each other. Put the other picture in the circle that is alone on the other side of the page." Using the combination WG, BG, BB as an example, if the subject placed the two pictures of the females in the adjacent circles, he was considered to be sorting by sex. In a similar vein, he was considered to be sorting by race if he placed the two pictures of the Black children in the adjacent circles. It was possible to sort the pictures in a manner which did not reflect the use of race or sex as a basis of association. Some sortings were made in this manner.

The subjects for the study were 328 second-grade children from six public schools in Toledo, Ohio. The student populations in two of the schools were comprised of White children only. Participants from these schools consisted of 62 boys and 50 girls. Participants from the remaining four schools, which were racially integrated, consisted of 52 White boys, 45 White girls, 54 Black boys and 65 Black girls. The experimental tasks were administered in small groups, 10-15 subjects per group. Two males, one White and one Black, served as experimenters, with each being equally involved in all sessions.

The number and percentages of race/sex sortings by various groups are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

The data were analyzed by a series of chi square tests. The analysis focused principally on six subgroupings of subjects, based on race, sex, and type of school attended. For all of the groups, race was the more prepotent of the two bases for making associations among children. The ratio was on an order of almost 2 to 1. The proportions of race/sex sortings did not vary significantly among the six groups, using the chi square test of differences between proportions (Klugh, 1970) as a test of significance. Specifically, white children attending racially integrated schools did not differ significantly from white children attending all-white schools in the proportions of sorting on the criteria of race and sex. Also, race and sex membership of students had no significant effects on their sorting patterns.

Of additional interest in the investigation was whether sorting patterns by sex, accross racial lines, varied if the subject himself was included in the pairings, as distinguished from his pairing of others accross racial lines. For example, if a White girl is given pictures of a White boy, Black boy, and a Black girl, would classification by race be as dominant as in instances in which she is sorting the combination, White girl, Black girl, and Black boy? Assuming that she sorted by sex in both cases, in the former instance she is integrating others across racial lines, whereas, in the latter she is integrating herself. The rationale for hypothesizing that a difference may exist in the two situations was as follows: In the American culture, it is often the case that individuals take a more affirmative position towards racial integration if the matter involves others than if it involves themselves. Comparisons of subjects in the two contrasting situations did not indicate, however, that this tendency was reflected in the photo sorting tasks.

TABLE 1

Number and Percentage of Photo Sorts on Criteria of Race and Sex by Children in Racially Integrated Schools.

	Photo-Combinations											
	BB	BG	WG	BB	BG	WB	WB	WG	BB	WB	WG	BG
	Race	Sex	Neither	Race	Sex	Neither	Race	Sex	Neither	Race	Sex	Neither
White Boys N=52	27	13	12	25	16	11	25	12	15	17	23	12
	52%	25%	23%	48%	31%	21%	48%	23%	29%	33%	44%	23%
White Girls N=45	21	16	8	21	16	8	24	13	8	17	11	17
	46%	36%	18%	46%	36%	18%	53%	29%	18%	38%	24%	38%
Black Boys N=54	24	17	13	26	13	15	24	17	13	27	19	8
	44%	32%	24%	48%	24%	28%	44%	31%	25%	50%	35%	15%
Black Girls N=65	30	19	16	31	18	16	25	30	10	38	21	6
	46%	29%	25%	48%	27%	25%	38%	46%	16%	58%	32%	10%

TABLE 2

Number and Percentage of Photo Sorts on Criteria of Race and Sex by Children in All-White Schools.

	Photo-Combinations											
	BB	BG	WG	BB	BG	WB	WB	WG	BB	WB	WG	BG
	Race	Sex	Neither	Race	Sex	Neither	Race	Sex	Neither	Race	Sex	Neither
White Boys N=62	35	18	9	33	20	9	31	20	11	30	22	10
	56%	29%	15%	53%	32%	15%	50%	32%	18%	48%	35%	17%
White Girls N=50	22	11	17	30	11	9	21	11	18	25	18	7
	44%	22%	34%	60%	22%	18%	42%	22%	36%	50%	36%	14%

The proportions of sortings that were based neither on race nor sex varied from 7% to 38% among the various groupings and picture combinations. This outcome is difficult to explain. On the one hand, it might be supposed that some subjects did not fully understand the sorting tasks. However, examination of the data did not indicate that particular individuals failed repeatedly to use the two criteria. Rather the incidences of non-criterial sorting were distributed accross individuals. Another explanation is that the criteria of race and sex, in these instances, were subordinated to individuals' own, subjective criteria, which transcended racial and sexual lines. This seemed to be a more plausible explanation since all subjects clearly demonstrated an awareness of the two criteria.

The findings that all groups made more associations based on race than on sex suggests that the children may regard members of the same race as having more in common than members of the same sex. However, it would be premature to reach these conclusions on the basis of the data from this study alone. It would be necessary to know whether the children's sortings mirrored what they observed about human interaction patterns in society, or whether their sortings reflected a logical conceptual basis for making associations among objects and events in their environment. It is also true that situational factors and purposes would affect what associations might be made, given a choice between the two criteria. For example, sex might be used predominantly in pairing persons for certain types of athletic activities. These matters require more controlled study, and they suggest interesting lines of inquiry for future research.

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